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THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



CALIFORNIA

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Tom Grey

Red-tailed Hawks are frequent casualties at Altamont.

GGA Continues to Push to Protect Altamont Pass Birds

In July 2008, Alameda County's Avian Monitoring Team issued a report on the status of bird mortality at the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. This is the most comprehensive report of ongoing bird mortality issued since Golden Gate Audubon and four other Bay Area Audubon Chapters settled their historic lawsuit in January 2007. The report analyzes data from October 2005 to September 2007 and measures the companies' progress towards the 50% reduction in bird kill required by the 2007 settlement agreement.

Unfortunately, the report indicates that little or no progress has been made to date on reducing bird kill. The report indicates that kill of all raptors has gone up substantially, stating that comparisons between a 2004 "baseline study" and the 2005-2007 study reveal "marked increases in the annual mortality rates and total fatalities of most target species...except the Golden Eagle, which decreased by 35%." The report states that when the four target raptor species identified by the settlement are combined (Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Golden Eagle, and Burrowing Owl), the mortality rate increased 74% over baseline. The baseline mortality established in the settlement agreement was 1,300 raptors per year.

Despite these apparently staggering increases, the report also raises several questions about the trend in bird mortality and about how best to reduce the

"Yes" on WW for East Bay Parks

Golden Gate Audubon supports Measure WW on the East Bay ballot in November and believes it is a win-win for conservation, wildlife, and people. The \$500 million park bond measure, sponsored by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), is an extension of Measure AA, passed by East Bay voters 20 years ago. Measure AA has helped preserve 34,000 acres of open space, develop over 100 miles of new trails, create 17 new regional parks, and fund 235 neighborhood recreation projects. While much has been accomplished, the growing East Bay population has created demand to acquire new parklands, protect and restore additional natural habitat, and help communities support their local park and recreation facilities.

If approved by a two-thirds vote in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, Measure WW will enable EBRPD to continue to restore urban creeks, protect wildlife, purchase and save open space, wetlands and bay shoreline, and acquire, develop, and improve local and regional parks, trails, and recreational facilities for East Bay residents. Measure WW will not increase the tax rate above the current maximum rate of \$10 per year per \$100,000 of assessed valuation.

The park district has plans for more than 67 current and future parks, open space, trails, and shoreline projects with Measure WW funds. Projects include developing the Oakland

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ROSTER

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

Design and layout e.g. communications

Maximizing Your Charitable Dollars

One of the lowest cost ways to maximize your charitable dollars is to donate low cost basis, highly appreciated stock to Golden Gate Audubon. Your cost is the initial dollars paid, not the current market value. If you sell, your commission costs and taxes reduce the cash available for your donation. If you give the stock, you are eligible for current-year federal income tax deductions based on the current market value of the stock on the day of transfer, within the limitations of the IRS code. Your gift is not reduced by capital gains taxes, so Golden Gate Audubon gets full market value.

Say your cost of a stock is \$200 and the current market value is \$1,000. If sold, you face capital gains taxes on the \$800 gain. After paying taxes you give the remaining cash to Golden Gate Audubon. Instead, if you give the \$1,000 stock to charity, there is no tax deterioration. This increases the amount you give and increases the amount Golden Gate Audubon gets, benefiting both. Golden Gate Audubon can provide information regarding transfers from your stock account to theirs. Thank you for thinking of us.

—Susan Consey

Susan Consey is a financial advisor and certified financial planner for Morgan Stanley, based in Oakland. Susan has been managing the financial assets for Golden Gate Audubon since June 2003. She is also a long-time Golden Gate Audubon member and supporter and an enthusiastic birder. Questions regarding stocks gifts to Golden Gate Audubon can be directed to Susan Consey (Susan.Consey@morganstanley.com or 510.891.5204) or to Elizabeth Murdock (emurdock@goldengateaudubon.org or 510.843.9912).

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Help the Climate and the Birds

During the month of October, sign up for PG&E's ClimateSmart program and Golden Gate Audubon can receive a donation of up to \$25,000. ClimateSmart makes it easy to reduce your home or business's environmental impact. When buildings use natural gas and electricity, they produce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). As a ClimateSmart contributor, you balance out those emissions by making a 100% tax-deductible contribution to fund GHG capture or reduction projects. The average home's typical contribution is less than \$5 a month. Visit pge.com/climatesmart/charity to enroll and learn more about becoming a climate neutral home or business. When you sign up in October, pick Golden Gate Audubon as your charity of choice and PG&E will donate back to the organization on your behalf, up to \$25,000. The more people who sign up and choose GGA, the larger donation it can receive... so pass this message on to a friend!



Volunteers Tapped for Awards

Three highly deserving volunteers were honored by Golden Gate Audubon at the GGA Volunteer thank you party on Sept. 13, 2008, at Crissy Field. Matt Zlatunich of San Francisco received the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award, and Audre Newman and Rusty Scalf, both of the East Bay, shared the honors of GGA's first Paul Covell Conservation Education Award.

Matt Zlatunich has been a legendary member of Golden Gate Audubon's San Francisco Conservation Committee for many years. Four years ago, he started a Western Snowy Plover monitoring program at Crissy Field, where he recruited and trained volunteers, developed a survey form, and produced two reports of survey results that were presented to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. In the Presidio, Matt has done extensive, on-the-ground habitat restoration and worked on a citizen science project to maintain records of Presidio birds over a period of years. Last year, he trained novice and expert birders at Crissy Field Center to conduct visual and point counts of Presidio songbirds, and predator counts. Matt's volunteer work also extends to Alcatraz Island, where he has worked with the island biologist to develop a bird management plan, conducted a songbird survey, and led bird walks for adults and children. Golden Gate Audubon's handsome "Field Guide to 100 Birds of Heron's Head," published in 2007, was co-authored by Matt, who provided his writing pro-bono. If he's not out monitoring plovers at Crissy Field, weeding invasive plants, or conducting bird surveys in the Presidio, Matt may be found at a public meeting in San Francisco, speaking up for Golden Gate Audubon's interests in protecting natural habitat and locally endangered birds.

Elsie Roemer was a long-time Golden Gate Audubon activist who dedicated her life to preserving wetlands in Alameda. Created in her memory, the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award is given to outstanding GGA volunteers to recognize their efforts and consistent dedication to preserving the environment. "Matt Zlatunich exemplifies



Matt Zlatunich

the essence of Elsie Roemer's resolve and activism in defense of our natural world," says GGA President Diane Ross-Leech.

Our new Conservation Education Award is named in honor of Paul Covell, an active and well-known Golden Gate Audubon member from the late 1930s until his death in the 1990s. According to longtime GGA member and activist Dan Murphy, "Paul was a great birder, who led countless field trips for Golden Gate Audubon, served as a board member and as president, and was a member of the conservation committee until about a year before he passed away. He was a heck of a nice guy. Professionally, he was the first urban park naturalist in the U.S. and was employed by the city of Oakland at Lake Merritt. No member in the history of our organization deserves the recognition of a conservation education award named in his honor more than Paul Covell."

Audre Newman's name is practically synonymous with Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Oakland environmental education program, as she has been an almost daily volunteer with the program for the past seven years. As a former science curriculum developer, Audre has shared her breadth of scientific knowledge and artistic skills to help develop the successful Eco-Oakland

curriculum. She participates in all aspects of the program, from producing lessons and activities used by students and their families to providing ideas and feedback to improve the program. She helps train new volunteers, teaches in the classroom and the field, and leads groups to identify or conserve plants and conduct bird censuses.



Audre Newman

For the Eco-Oakland annual "pollination" play, presented to first- through third- graders, Audre created costumes, managed the productions, and even acted in performances. Her Spanish-English bilingual skills enable her to reach out to

VOLUNTEERS continued on page 11



MORE OPEN SPACE FOR MORAGA. YES ON K

Since 1986, the Moraga Open Space Ordinance (MOSO) has protected a significant amount of open space, but several important areas were not included in the original initiative. Now Friends of Moraga Open Space has created "MOSO 2008," Measure K on the Moraga ballot in November, to extend the protections of MOSO into more areas, allowing only grazing and agriculture, outdoor recreation, very low density housing, and other open space uses. It will provide protection for sensitive habitats and scenic ridgelines, so the permitted housing will be less damaging than is currently allowed.

Some landowners and developers are pushing a deceptive measure—Measure J—that poses as open space protection but would require the town to allow hundreds of acres to be developed with sprawl housing. Golden Gate Audubon joins the Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance, and other environmental groups in asking Moraga voters to vote for the Moraga Open Space Ordinance proposed by Friends of Moraga Open Space in November.

—Phil Price



Tom Grey

Snowy Plover

PLOVER PLANS

Golden Gate Audubon volunteers conducted monitoring of the Western Snowy Plover from August 2007 through April 2008. Matt Zlatunich compiled the data, researched additional information, and authored a report entitled "Western Snowy Plover Monitoring at the Crissy Field

Wildlife Protection Area of the Presidio of San Francisco and the Effectiveness of the Seasonal Use Restriction 2007/2008." This insightful report was presented to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and is available for viewing on the GGA website. Recommendations to GGNRA management include implementing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recovery plan for the plover, implementing enforceable policies preventing visitors from bringing pets into the Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs), improving signage, reevaluating pedestrian use, and supporting the WPAs for ecological stewardship, biodiversity, and endangered species protection.

In September 2007 the Final Recovery Plan for the Western Snowy Plover was released by USFWS. Largely due to GGA's efforts, the WPAs have officially been recognized as Western Snowy Plover wintering sites and have been included in the recovery plan. The Final Recovery Plan can be viewed at <http://www.fws.gov/arcata/es/birds/WSP/plover.html>.

—Noreen Weeden

TURF TALK

San Francisco Conservation Committee member Matt Fuller, along with Arleen Navarette, San Francisco Public Utilities Commissioner, reviewed, researched, and commented on the ecosystem impacts of synthetic turf as part of the city's Synthetic Turf Task Force. They recommended that the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department: (1) work with the Director of the Natural Areas Program to assist with site selection, including field selection criteria; (2) consult with native landscaping specialists to plant native, drought tolerant, and wildlife-friendly trees, shrubs, and groundcover around renovated playfield sites as appropriate; (3) provide appropriate landscape and irrigation improvements to all impacted areas surrounding the synthetic turf fields; (4) identify opportunities to convert asphalt play space into synthetic turf as part of the Department's evaluation of future

fields; (5) continue its standard practice of submitting each project to the Planning Department for general plan review as well as a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. If you are concerned about this issue, please watch for playfields on the agenda at Recreation & Parks Department meetings in your neighborhood or contact nwweden@comcast.net.

—Noreen Weeden

ISLAND TREASURES

The city of San Francisco is putting together a master plan for Yerba Buena Island that will include 6,000 units of housing. GGA commented on the Habitat Management Plan for the island. Yerba Buena Island and Treasure Island are important sites for birds where the GGA Christmas Bird Count has reported 100 or more species in each of the past four years. Many plan components are being evaluated under the sustainable or green umbrella, including ferry and bicycle transit, LEED gold buildings with solar power, compost from residents to support an organic farm on the island to be watered from a new water treatment system, permeable water flow to a wetland, a wind farm, and underwater tidal power. GGA will comment on and provide support for wildlife on the island as well as for wildlife habitat at Treasure Island where 13,500 housing units and wind turbine technology are planned. If you are interested in these projects, please contact nwweden@comcast.net.

—Noreen Weeden

LAKE MERCED REFUGE?

The Lake Merced Management Plan is being developed: Included in discussions are the possible designation of Lake Merced or a part of the surrounding area as a wildlife refuge, and construction of a nature center. Since the 1930s, Golden Gate Audubon has opposed skeet shooting as incompatible with nesting birds: Shot and skeet continue to litter the lake and uplands. The current tenant, the Pacific Rod & Gun Club, should be responsible for removing these pollutants. If you are inter-

ested in this project or the future nearby Parkmerced development (where housing units are planned to increase from 3,221 to 8,900, and a green energy plan including wind turbines is being developed), please contact nwmeden@comcast.net.

—Noreen Weeden



Tom Grey

Marsh Wren, a common species at Lake Merced.

WINDY CITY

Mayor Gavin Newsom has established an urban wind task force for the city and county of San Francisco to encourage economic growth and environmental leadership through the development of clean energy. The wind task force was announced in April and will run through January 2009. Mayor Newsom has asked that the departments of Building Inspection and Planning expedite permitting and minimize costs for the installation of residential, commercial, and municipal wind generation turbines. He has also requested that city departments advance wind power generation by incorporating wind turbines into the design of existing and new facilities whenever possible.

The Task Force is composed of wind company representatives, city employees, PG&E, architects, a few residents with wind turbines, business owners, and representatives from Golden Gate Audubon and the Sierra Club Bay Chapter. The August meeting of the task force covered presentations on current small wind turbine technology offerings. There are currently six wind turbines operating in San Francisco, and wind technology proponents are promoting new, small wind design turbines, some incor-

Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Join the Conservation Committee on your side of the bay to find out about local projects. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. It is currently meeting in different locations each month to discover the best new digs in the East Bay. The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum.

TOGETHERGREEN

TogetherGreen is a new National Audubon Society program made possible by generous support from Toyota. The goals of TogetherGreen are to build conservation leadership, engage millions of people in conservation action, and achieve lasting conservation results. Over the next five years, TogetherGreen will implement a series of national conservation initiatives that support these goals and promote the idea that everyone has a critical role to play in finding solutions to our most pressing environmental challenges. Through the TogetherGreen partnership, Golden Gate Audubon will expand outreach efforts to engage volunteers at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. The Alameda Wildlife Refuge, an Important Bird Area, is the largest and most important least tern colony in northern California and the Bay Area's only night-roosting location for brown pelicans. Join us for monthly workdays at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge for TogetherGreen Volunteer Days—see October 12 event below.

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Wildlife Conservation Expo at Mission Bay, San Francisco. Help Golden Gate Audubon spread the word about local conservation at our information table at the expo. Please contact Jennifer Robinson if you would like to join us.

Sunday, October 12, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday. Come help us prepare habitat for California Least Terns! Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

Saturday, October 18, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Invasive plant and trash removal at Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline. Enter the park from Swan Way and follow the road to the end parking lot. Then look for the wooden observation platform (currently bring remodeled) adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh.

Saturday, October 25, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at Harding Park. Help with weeding, watering, and planting projects at our native plant site. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd.

For more information on any of these activities or events, or for directions to any of the sites, please contact Jennifer Robinson, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

We have many other volunteer opportunities involving outreach, office assistance, and more. Looking for a new project? Join us for our Volunteer Orientation at Golden Gate Audubon's main office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue Suite G Berkeley, on Thursday, October 9, 7-8:30 p.m. Learn more about Golden Gate Audubon, meet new people, and enjoy some good pizza!

porating solar technology. Golden Gate Audubon supports renewable energy when it is sited using best available science and doesn't have a negative impact on wildlife. Siting and monitoring will be key to ensuring that green wind energy does not have unacceptable impacts on birds, bats, or other wildlife. Golden Gate Audubon will

be drawing upon its experience with the avian crisis at Altamont Pass to help the city identify potential wildlife issues that might arise with increased wind development, including urging the city to follow best scientific protocols for wind development.

—Noreen Weeden



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

🚲 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, October 3, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

The first Friday of the month walk will resume on Friday, October 3rd. Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-mile, two-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Berries are ripening and migration is underway: always time for surprises!

Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden and
Strybing Arboretum

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. – noon

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis,
SF Nature Education, Darin Dawson, SF
Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160;
www.sfnature.org

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/bookstore at front gate of Botanical Garden, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. An adult must accompany children. Co-sponsored by Botanical Garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sunday, October 5, 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Botanical Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of Golden Gate Park has several microhabitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is oriented toward beginning birders.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland

Monday, October 6, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

Join Bob Lewis on the first Monday in October at Arrowhead Marsh at the MLK Shoreline, noted for Clapper Rails, Sora, and Virginia Rails. We will look for returning shorebirds and waterfowl. The tide will be moderate, so we may see a Clapper Rail walking across the mudflats.

Take Hwy 880 towards the Oakland Airport. Exit at Hegenberger Road, going west. Turn right on Doolittle, and left on Swan Way. Turn left into the MLK Shoreline Regional Park, and continue to the end of the road. Meet at the last parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

Second Annual Heron's Head Park Walk

San Francisco Waterfront

Saturday, October 11, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com,
415.355.0450

Late risers, here is your chance to sleep in, yet visit an amazing bird spot on San Francisco's southeastern waterfront. In the 17 years since members of the Golden Gate Audubon Society brought attention to the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) of the increasing use by shorebirds at an illegal fill site formerly known as Pier 98, this Port of San Francisco property has blossomed into an oasis for resident and migrating shorebirds, waders, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. After a hike out to the tip of Heron's Head and a look around India Basin, we might carpool over to another more recent but less accessible restoration site, Pier 94, to see more birds and discuss how unstable bay lands can be transformed into vital wildlife habitat.

Getting there: From Interstate 280 or Hwy. 101, take the Cesar Chavez/Army Street exit. Go east on Cesar Chavez. Turn right on Third Street. Turn left on Cargo Way, which ends at the park entrance. To use mass

transit, take #19 Polk bus to Evans Avenue and Jennings Street. Walk down Jennings to Cargo Way. The park is at the intersection of Jennings and Cargo Way.

Albany Mudflats

Sunday, Oct. 12, 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Oliver James, oliverjames91@gmail.com
510.717.9969

We'll search for waterbirds on the mud, and land birds on the bulb. Bring a scope if you have one.

Directions: Exit Buchanan in Albany and turn west. Meet near raised wooden platforms.

Hawk Hill

Marin County

Sunday, October 12, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Pamela Llewellyn (former
GGRO volunteer), 510.843.7904,
seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Group size is limited. Contact leader for sign-up.

Hawk Hill, part of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory located in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, is the premier hawk-watch location in the west. Join us during autumn migration, when thousands of birds of prey, including up to 19 species, cross over the Marin Headlands during their southern migration. Bring lunch and liquids, sunscreen, and hat. Layered clothing advisable. Parking limited; carpool if possible.

From south, cross Golden Gate Bridge and take second exit, Alexander Ave. Get in left lane following signs to 101 San Francisco. Turn left at stop sign and cross under freeway. Turn right onto Conzelman Rd. and drive 1.8 mi. to Hawk Hill. Park and walk up hill past the locked gate. From north, take last Sausalito exit to GGNRA. Turn left at stop sign. Go up hill. Meet at platform with wingspan diagrams.

Monterey Bay from Santa Cruz

Sunday, October 12, 7 a.m.

Debi Shearwater, 831.637.8527,
debi@shearwaterjourneys.com

Shearwater Journeys, providing seabirding trips since 1976, will sail from Santa Cruz for a fall bird trip in north Monterey Bay—the last trip of the year. Meet at 7 a.m. in the Upper Yacht Harbor. Fall is

the optimum time to enjoy this trip on Monterey Bay. See September Gull for details or email Debi for at debi@shearwaterjourneys.com. Cost of the trip is \$115.00 to GGAS members and \$145 for non-members. To reserve your space, send a check to: Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 190, Hollister CA 95024, (no refunds). Along with your payment also include the date of the trip, noting that you are a GGAS member. Also include a phone number and e-mail address (if available) for each member of your party and a self-addressed stamped envelope. A small fuel surcharge may be required the day of the trip. Trip information will be mailed to you upon payment.

Palo Alto Baylands Bicycle Trip

Santa Clara County

Sunday, October 12, 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233,

kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Meet at the Duck Pond at Palo Alto Baylands. We should find many species of birds on the bay, ponds, and sloughs. High tide at 11:39, good for sighting rails. There are no hills on this trip in one of the best birding areas on San Francisco Bay. Much of the trip will be on paved trails and designated bike lanes, with some on gravel and some on roads. After birding the Baylands area we will bicycle to Mountain View Shoreline, Stevens Creek Trail, and return to the Baylands, making a loop. Trip ends around 3 p.m. All levels of birders and bicyclists are welcome. Bring binoculars, liquids, and lunch. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Directions by car: From Highway 101 in Palo Alto, take the Embarcadero East Exit. Follow Embarcadero to intersection with Harbor Rd. and turn left. Use parking area on right before entrance to park to avoid being locked in when park closes. Continue on bicycle into park to Duck Pond on left. For public transit information, contact leader. Bay Trail info online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>

Point Pinole Regional Shoreline

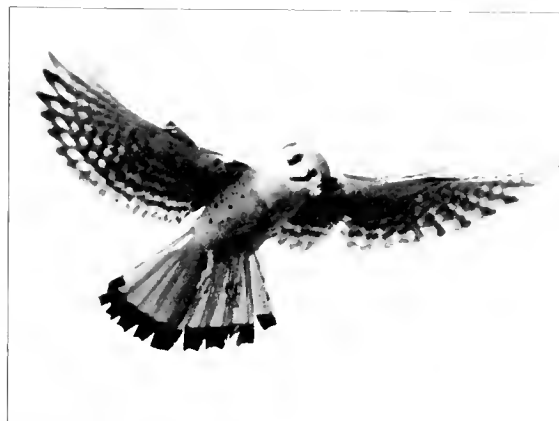
Richmond

Thursday, October 16, 9:30 a.m.

Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

We'll catch the shuttle bus that departs

on the half hour from the parking area at Point Pinole, and ride out to the fishing docks. We'll walk back along the main trails to the parking lot, about a mile. We'll see some of the waterbirds at the point, and then look for wintering land-birds as we walk back. With luck, we may see a hawk or two! Suitable for beginning birders. To reach the park, from 1-80 in Richmond, exit at the Richmond Parkway. From the Richmond Parkway, turn right onto Giant Highway and proceed to the park entrance.



American Kestrel

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Friday, October 17, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Charles Hibbard; Dominik Mosur; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org, 415.554.9600 x16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Point Isabel Regional Shoreline

San Francisco

Sunday, Oct. 19, 7:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Oliver James; oliverjames91@gmail.com, 510.717.9969

We'll scan the salt marsh habitat for shore-birds and also pay special attention to the movements of land birds through the surrounding chaparral.

Directions: Exit Central Ave. in Richmond. Go west on Central. Right on Rydin Road. Meet in parking lot at end of Rydin Road.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Wednesday, October 22,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Join us at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. The returning migrants should be out in force this month, with Goldeneyes—Barrow's, with luck—and most of the rest of the diving ducks. The park should offer some warblers and a few surprises.

Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking at boathouse lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Children's Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

Point Reyes National Seashore

San Francisco

Saturday, October 25, 8 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf; rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at Five Brooks Pond. We will visit Olema Marsh, the seashore visitor's center, Limantour Beach, and maybe Drakes Estero. Bring warm jacket, liquids, and lunch. Email leader for more details.

Jewel Lake and Quarry Trail

San Francisco

Saturday, Oct. 25, 7:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Oliver James, oliverjames91@gmail.com, 510.717.9969

We'll start our morning searching the lush riparian areas of Jewel Lake for fall migrants and then carpool south to the Quarry trailhead to venture upslope into chaparral and mixed forest. Some moderate hiking. Bring liquids, snacks, and warm clothes. Park at end of Canon Drive in Berkeley in Little Farm area of Tilden Regional Park. Meet in parking lot.

Napa River Birding Cruise

San Francisco Bay Area

Friday, November 7, 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pamela Lewellyn, 510.843.7904, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 12



SPEAKER SERIES

SARAH REED, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m.

Natural History of Birds in Ecuador

RUDY GELIS

Berkeley: Thursday, October 16

San Francisco: Tuesday, October 28

Ecuador is about the size of Colorado, yet nearly 1,600 species of birds have been recorded there. In an hour-long presentation, Rudy Gelis will discuss his exploration and study of that diversity and share his extraordinary photographs, including of some rare and endangered species, from his new, co-authored book, *Plumas: Birds in Ecuador*. The talk provides a brief introduction on what birds do for a living in Ecuador.

Gelis will then take you on a journey across the country, from the Pacific Choco rainforest to the Pacific deserts, then to the Andes and their respective high mountain landscapes and cloud forests, and finally to the Amazon Basin. Gelis will also share interesting anecdotes from his years of leading bird and natural history tours and studying bird behavior in Ecuador and Peru. He will touch on topics such as mixed species flocking, endangered and endemic species, nesting and foraging behavior, and biogeography and distribution.

Rudy Gelis's career in ornithology began when he was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 1997. After studying nesting Andean Condors in Argentina and penguins on the Falkland Islands, Gelis settled in Ecuador. Over the past decade, as an active member of the Yanayacu Natural History Research Group in Ecuador, he has collaborated on numerous publications in refereed ornithology journals. In Ecuador Gelis studied the nests and breeding behavior of Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Red-winged Wood-Rail, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, five species of antpitta, Masked and Bluish Flowerpiercers, Barred Hawk, plus

many more. He has assisted in other ornithological works, including breeding bird surveys in the northeastern United States, and clay-lick use by parrots and macaws in the rainforest of southern Peru. He has a strong background in botany and great interest in all of the natural world, and leads birding and natural history tours throughout much of Ecuador and Peru. In addition, Gelis instructs university-level natural history courses in Ecuador, offers ecotourism courses, and assists in professional workshops for guides and park guards in Latin America.



Rudy Gelis

Harpy Eagle



Red-winged Wood-Rail

Rudy Gelis

Classes

North American Owls

Dave Quady

Oakland Museum

October 14, 15, 21 and 22; 7 – 8:30 p.m. Evening field trips October 18, weekend of October 25 – 26, and an early November weekend.

Seldom seen but often heard, owls have a fascination for most of us. Learn what makes an owl different from other birds, how to identify them by sight and sound, and understand more about their habits and habitats. The class will be illustrated with slides, and with the sounds of these birds of the night.



Tom Grey

Barn Owl

Dave Quady is author of the owls section of National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America*, and a frequent field trip leader for Golden Gate Audubon.

Fee is \$75, payable to Golden Gate Audubon. Call 510.843.2222 for more information.

Class limit: 20 people

Location: Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street, near the Lake Merritt BART station: free parking is available in the museum's garage. The class limited to 25 participants. To sign up, contact Kristen Bunting at 510.843.2222.

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin).

Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

San Francisco: County Fair Building, SF Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.

Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html



The summer doldrums drew to an end in August with increasing movements of shorebirds, pelagic species, and early passerines.

LOONS TO DUCKS

Several pelagic trips this month reported noteworthy sightings, including a Laysan Albatross Aug. 10 and 23 off the Farallon Islands, SF (AH; JT). August's highlight was indisputably a **Wedge-tailed Shearwater** (*Puffinus pacificus*) on Aug. 23 off the coast of Año Nuevo SR, SM (TE, RW; oob). If accepted, this sighting would be just the 5th CBRA record in CA waters. Pelagic boats to Bodega Cyn. and Cordell Bank, MRN, spotted a single Wilson's and 250-280 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels on the 1st and 4 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels on the 12th (DS; oob).

No boat was necessary to spot the Little Blue Heron that lingered along ALA Cr. in Fremont, ALA, through the 23rd (BA, KR; mob). The 2 resident Harlequin Ducks at Coyote Pt., SM, were joined by a Long-tailed Duck on Aug. 24 (RT). An early White-winged Scoter made it to Coyote Pt. on the 8th (DMa), and an even earlier Black Scoter showed up at Año Nuevo SR, SM, on the 2nd (BRe).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

The season's first Prairie Falcon on Aug. 18 soared and then stooped near Coyote Ranch in Coyote Valley, SCL (RP). Aug. 22 brought the arrival of Pacific Golden-Plovers to Ora Loma Sewage Treatment Plant, ALA (BRi) and Coyote Pt. Yacht Club, SM (RT, AE). The next day, 2 more checked in at Schollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON (LH). On the 11th, 2 Solitary Sandpipers found companionship at Ocean Colony in Half Moon Bay, SM (AJ). A 3rd bird remained solitary at S. L. Merced, SF, on the 26th (RG, DMo). The Alviso Ruff remained at Salt Pond A16, SCL, through Aug. 19 (mob).

Common Terns were located at Coyote Pt., SM, on the 1st (RT); at Radio Rd. in Redwood Shores, SM, on the 17th (RT); and at Ocean Beach, SF, on the 22nd (ADM).



Wedge-tailed Shearwater

The Alviso Black Tern, present on Salt Pond A16 throughout July, apparently moved to Sunnyvale WPCP, Aug. 9-25 (MM; BB). Another Black Tern explored Crissy Field in the Presidio, SF, on the 23rd (MB).

Despite reports of abundant krill off the coast, bay watchers noted an irruption of Common Murres the 1st week of Aug., with high counts of 29 on Aug 2 at Oyster Pt. in S. SF, SM (RT) and then 161 between the SF Ferry Terminal and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, SF/CC/MRN, on the 5th (EP, GB). Particularly noteworthy was the prevalence of adults with precocial young. Whatever the cause, it probably also accounted for the 3 Rhinoceros Auklets along the Hayward RS (ALA) coast Jul. 31-Aug. 4 (BRi; ML, BP, ADM). Finally, 2 Xantus's Murrelets rounded out the Alcid

list, seen on the Aug. 12 pelagic trip to Bodega Cyn. and Cordell Bank (DS; oob).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A pair of Spotted Owls turned up on the 5th at the Mesa in Bolinas, MRN (FB, JM). On the 26th, 9 Black Swifts sliced the air over Hawk Hill in the MRN Headlands (TB). Black-Chinned Hummingbirds visited feeders in Moraga, CC, on the 6th (MC) and at the Wildlife Gallery in Bolinas, MRN, on the 16th (KH). Eastern Kingbirds invaded Aug. 14-24 at Heron's Head, SF (DMo); West Side Rd. at Bodega Bay, SON (HH; oob); and West Wash, Lincoln Park, SF (mob). Lone Purple Martins cruised through Aug. 8-16 at N. L. Merced, SF (BF; mob); Coyote Pt., SM (RT); and Napa River Ecological Reserve (ML). On the 10th, a Bank Swallow joined the flock hawking over New Chicago Marsh in Alviso, SCL (SR).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

A Blackpoll and 2 Black-and-white Warblers gave a foretaste of the warbler-fest to come. A Summer Tanager visited Valle Vista Staging Area in Moraga, CC, Aug. 8-12 (TH; mob). On Aug. 23-24, another Summer Tanager sang "Bird Song" at Jerry Garcia Amphitheater in McLaren Park, SF (AH; AW). On the 19th, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak checked out a backyard near Heather Farm Park in Walnut Cr., CC (BS, fide HH). A female Indigo Bunting hung out with the Lazulis at Crissy Lagoon in the Presidio, SF, on Aug. 23 (AH).

New Birding Resources: <http://www.goldengatepark.org/for/complete-sighting-data>

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Brent Plater for assistance in compiling data.

Abbreviations for Observers: ADM, Al DeMartini; AE, Al Eisner; AH, Alan Hopkins; AJ, Al Jaramillo; AKe, Anne Kelly; AKI, Andy Kleinhesselink; AW, Adam Winer; BA, Bill Ayers; BB, Bill Bousman; BF, Brian Fitch; BP, Bob Power; BRe, Bob Reiling; BRi, Bob Richmond; BS, Bobbie Stacy; CL, Cindy Lieurance; DMa, Dean Manley; DMo, Dominik Mosur; DS, Debi Shearwater; DW, Dave Weber; EP, Eric Pilotte; FB, Fiona Burgess; FV, Frank Vanslager; GB, Gayatri Bharadwaj; HH, Hugh Harvey; JM, Jeff Miller; JT, Jason Thompson; KH, Keith Hansen; KR, Kathy Robertson; LG, Laurie Graham; LH, Lisa Hug; MB, Matt Brady; MC, Judi Cooper; ME, Mark Eaton; ML, John Luther; MM, Michael Mammoser; RG, Robert Garrock; RP, Ryan Phillips; RT, Ron Thorn; RW, Roger Wolfe; SR, Steve Rottenborn; TB, Tim Behr; TE, Todd Easterla; TH, Tim Howe

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SFBBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

unacceptable and illegal kills that continue in this important bird habitat. For example, the Avian Monitoring Team and the County's Scientific Review Committee (SRC) have both questioned whether the apparent increase in bird mortality is tied to differences in bird abundances during the two study periods. The report's conclusions may also stem from the challenges of comparing various data sets collected under different protocols or study designs. The Avian Monitoring Team and SRC have also faced additional challenges, such as standardizing methods to assess whether birds died from turbine strikes or from another cause (for example, when only a pile of feathers is found) and establishing accurate "scaling factors" to determine the annual Altamont-wide mortality for some of the smaller raptors. Notably, the report indicates that over 1,200 Burrowing Owls were killed each year between 2005 and 2007, although some scientists question whether this many Burrowing Owls are actually present in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area.

The County's SRC is currently reviewing the report and working with the Monitoring Team to address these questions. But while the report may reflect some uncertainties, the County's SRC agrees unanimously on one point: The turbine-related avian mortality at Altamont Pass has not decreased—and the companies' efforts are

not on track to reduce the bird kill by half by November 2009.

Golden Gate Audubon is deeply concerned about the companies' lack of progress. The SRC made its first finding that the bird kill had not decreased in September 2007 and subsequently recommended an immediate four-month winter shutdown and removal of roughly 300 newly identified high-risk turbines. But the companies have so far declined to implement these recommendations. Golden Gate Audubon has been in legal mediation with them since January 2008 over noncompliance, as they failed to remove the highest-risk turbines according to the timelines established in the settlement agreement (see March 2008 *Gull*), and we are pushing the companies to implement the SRC recommendations in full.

We are also focused on more rapidly advancing the second goal of the 2007 settlement—creation of a long-term conservation plan to balance bird conservation and wind energy—as part of a long term solution to the avian crisis at Altamont Pass. Preliminary studies, including the July 2008 monitoring report, indicate that newer-generation turbines *may* reduce raptor mortality, provided these machines are properly sited. This theory needs to be fully tested, however, before new turbines are placed at Altamont Pass. We are currently working with the companies and the County to craft a state-approved Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP),

which will set conservation goals for birds at Altamont Pass and utilize the best available science to assess the possibility of "repowering" the Altamont.

Golden Gate Audubon—joined by Ohlone, Santa Clara Valley, Marin, and Mount Diablo Audubons—is continuing to lead the effort to protect birds at Altamont Pass and facilitate the production of "greener" wind energy at the site. In the coming months, we will continue legal mediation with the companies and to advance our work on the NCCP, which will provide a long-term framework for conserving birds and other wildlife at Altamont Pass.

—Elizabeth Murdock

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Both the permit process and the NCCP provide opportunities for public comment. Watch our website for information on how you can get involved, or email jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org to join our team of advocacy volunteers to receive Action Alerts on this and other relevant topics.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

PEREGRINE FALCON (\$500 TO \$999):
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IN MEMORY OF
Francis Gay: Claire Englander
Barbara Brick-Cross: Gordon & Mary Falgout

GRANTS
Wells Fargo: Eco-Oakland & Eco-Richmond Programs
TogetherGreen Volunteer Days: Alameda Wildlife Refuge



Charles Denson

Burrowing Owl



Kathy Jarrett

Rusty Scalf

VOLUNTEERS from page 3

many students and parents in the program, as well as to oversee the pen-pal exchange program between elementary school students and teachers in Oakland and Sierra Gorda, Mexico, that sparks cross-cultural communication, environmental awareness, and camaraderie among the children of both countries.

"Audre has shown a profound commitment to the goals of the Eco-Oakland program to empower and inspire students and families of East Oakland to become effective stewards of their environment," says Anthony DeCicco, Eco-Oakland Program Manager. "Her assistance and dedication have been a blessing."

Rusty Scalf is well known by many Golden Gate Audubon members who have taken his sold-out birding classes and/or been on his popular field trips. As a teacher at Albany Adult School for the past 20 years, Rusty has reached hundreds of students, introducing them to native birds of the Bay Area and inspiring them to help protect and preserve our local environment. Rusty's bird expertise extends far beyond the Bay Area, and he has attracted hundreds of students to Golden Gate Audubon's summer classes on birds of the Sierra.

Over the past two decades, Rusty has led Golden Gate Audubon field trips both near

and far, from the Hayward and Eastshore State Park shorelines to Briones Regional Park, Point Reyes, and Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree National Park in southern California. For the past 20 years, he has led a Christmas Bird Count area in Oakland, helping new and existing GGA members and bird counters become more knowledgeable about Bay Area bird life.

Both as a teacher and field trip leader, Rusty is often the first GGA member that people meet, and his genuine and infectious enthusiasm for birds and natural history are a welcoming invitation for them to join Golden Gate Audubon and become active volunteers themselves.

"Rusty combines an incredible knowledge of birds with an inspirational teaching style that has transformed students into passionate birders and advocates for conservation," says Bob Lewis, GGA board member and chair of the education committee.

—Marjorie Blackwell

Save these dates!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Oakland, December 14, 2008

San Francisco, December 30, 2008

"YES" from cover

and North Richmond shorelines, acquiring and restoring urban creeks, expanding and developing the Bay Trail, East Bay Greenway, Delta and Ridge trails, and completing the Tidewater Recreation Area at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline. A complete project list is available on the EBRPD website at www.ebparks.org, or an electronic copy may be obtained by emailing a request to info@ebparks.org.

"If WW passes," says Golden Gate Audubon Executive Director Elizabeth Murdock, "we will monitor the funding and work with the Park District to ensure that wildlife habitat conservation and restoration projects receive top priority."

—Marjorie Blackwell

Bird the Valley



Bird your cares away at the 12th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium, Nov. 20-23 in Stockton. The symposium will be held at the Stockton Grand Hotel.

Evening programs include keynote speaker Hans Peeters, author of *Owls of California and the West* and John Muir Laws, author of *Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and Artist*. Workshops include "Raptor ID" by Joe Morlan, "Bird ID" by Jon Dunn, "Bird and Nature Digiscoping" by Clay Taylor, drawing workshops with John Muir Laws, our always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, and more.

We have programs for beginning birders and for people who want to make their gardens bird-friendly. Field trips frequently turn up chasable goodies. The Birder's Market is full of artists and vendors with many wonderful bird and nature related items.

For more info, see www.cvbs.org, or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net or (209) 369-2010.

FIELD TRIPS from page 7

If you've always wanted to see and bird the Napa River this is your opportunity. The M/V Delphinus will leave from "K" dock at the Vallejo Marina promptly at 9:30 a.m. to take advantage of the low tide. Come join us for a five-hour birding trip by boat; the tide will be falling and the birds should be great. Bring binoculars, lunch and appropriate clothing. Trip is limited to 32 participants. Cost is \$80 for members and \$90 for non-members. Reserve your space by contacting Kirsten Bunting at GGAS office at 510-843-2222 or ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. Payment must be received by October 10, 2008.

From the East Bay: Take Hwy. 80 East towards Sacramento. Cross Carquinez Bridge (\$4. toll), stay in right lanes. Exit at Sonoma Blvd. and continue in left lane until the Curtola Parkway intersection (stoplight) and jog left onto Mare Island Way. Go past the Vallejo Ferry Terminal and turn left at the stoplight onto Harbor Way. Turn left into the first driveway and park. A crew member will meet you at the gate for "K" dock. (Harbormaster's office is too far.)

Wildlife Refuges of the Sacramento Valley

Sutter Butte and Glenn Counties

Saturday and Sunday – December 13–14

Terry Colborn, tlcgc@aol.com or 530.758.0689

This weekend field trip to several refuges in the northern Sacramento Valley features both well known habitats for wintering waterfowl and some lesser known spots. On Saturday we'll tour Sacramento NWR: 25% of the world's Aleutian Canada Goose

population winters at Sac NWR. Other unique species include Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We'll visit several additional units of the Sacramento NWR complex to the east along the Sacramento River looking for Sandhill Cranes, Tri-colored Blackbirds, raptors, herons, egrets, and shorebirds. At day's end, we'll enjoy a group dinner and overnight in Williams.

On Sunday we'll search the farm roads west of Williams looking for wintering raptors, including Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, Prairie Falcon, and Golden Eagle before heading to Colusa NWR. We'll drive the three-mile auto loop and walk the one-mile nature trail, looking for Barn and Great Horned Owls, Wood Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Harris's Sparrow has been found along this trail in years past.

Next we'll bird the Sutter Buttes area. Target species include Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, and Golden Eagle. In the afternoon we'll tour Gray Lodge WMA where we expect to see large flights of Snow Geese and look for Ross's geese among them. We'll also look and listen for Sora, Virginia Rail, and American Bittern. We stay at the refuge until dusk when thousands of ibis, ducks, and geese take to wing and fly to nearby fields to feed during the night.

Space is limited and carpooling is essential. There are several hotels in Williams located along Highway 5; early room reservations are recommended. This is a great trip for beginners and seasoned birders alike. Participants may want to arrive on Friday night for the 7 a.m. start time on Saturday. For further details about meeting, directions, and/or to sign-up, contact the field trip leader.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the newsletter of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on items purchased at our Nature Store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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